

Being Visible: Students for Change

Cape Community

Alissa Silva '23 Editor

With the current state of the world, racial education is crucial in helping us progress. Sometimes, it feels as if our school education doesn't speak about these prevalent topics, but there is an organization that does.

The Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice started from a group of Sussex County people who organized a study group to read "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness" by Michelle Alexander. From this, the study group transformed into a social movement, shedding light on the racially-biased justice system. In the desire to take action, in June 2015, the SDARJ was created.

"The Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice is a non-partisan organization that educates, informs, and advocates for racial justice, equality, and fair opportunity," stated Gwendolyn Miller, the Education and Scholarship Chair of the SDARJ. A main goal for this organization includes educating people on change through knowledge and understanding of past and current racial issues and conditions. The group works to promote positive change for our youth's future as it relates to social justice. Through the SDARJ Education Committee, the Youth Education Committee was formed and chaired by Barbara Guthrie, Jim Henry, and Gail Jackson and addressed those goals through students' education. From there, Being Visible: Students for Change was created.

Being Visible: Students for Change are modules that allow students to become more aware of racial and social injustice and communicate about it in their daily interactions. Schools across the county are welcome to join; Cape Henlopen High School, Sussex Technical High School, and Sussex Academy are schools already participating.

The modules are set up

in two sixty-minute zoom sessions delivering essential content on topics. Facilitators lead the students through group discussion and breakout rooms to collaborate on the topic at hand. Peers then can add to a Google site available to them regarding their take-aways from the session.

So far, "Cultural Competency" and "How to Be an Antiracist" have been the modules conducted. "The next module, 'The History of Slavery in Delaware,' will be held Wednesday, March 24 from 5:00-6:00 pm. It will address enslavement in Delaware in the 18th and 19th centuries and

discuss how the legacy of slavery may affect our everyday lives.” said Ruth Cohen. She will be co-facilitating the module with Dr. Brigid Wolfgang.

Jim Henry, Barbara Guthrie, Gail Jackson, and Ruth Cohen are the facilitators of these modules and shared, “We have enjoyed our interaction with young people on these important topics. Hearing and sharing feedback solidified our belief that young people need to be involved with the process of making change.” The students themselves have expressed their positivity about the modules. “I believe that the students for change modules are very insightful... I think these topics are vital to talk about because we need to address issues like this,” stated Aya Daisy about her experience with the modules.

Modules that educate students about subjects like personal and institutional racism would be a great addition to schooling. Implementing them could lead to open dialogue and self-inventory on issues that are vital and relevant in this day and age in our society. One thing is for sure, these modules are certainly beneficial to the community in spreading awareness and dialogue on these extremely important issues.

If you are interested in attending these modules, feel free to email beguthr4562@gmail.com to sign up and attend.